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UNCLAS CAIRO 000972

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: AYMAN NOUR SEEMS HEALTHY, RELAXED IN PRISON

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

1. (SBU) During a regularly scheduled consular visit to several American Citizens incarcerated at the Torah Prison complex, just south of Cairo, Conoff had a "chance" encounter with detained political opposition leader Ayman Nour. Shortly after Conoff was admitted to the prison warden's office and began meeting an AMCIT detainee, the warden picked up the phone and was heard to summon Ayman Nour. After several minutes, Nour was brought in by guards, sat down across from the warden at his desk, accepted a cigarette, and engaged in light conversation. Conoff remained seated on a couch across the room with the AMCIT prisoner and did not have the opportunity to speak with Nour.

2. (SBU) Nour appeared reasonably relaxed and healthy (his lawyers have separately told us he is currently in good health and spirits). Nour was apparently wearing his own clothes, which conformed to the prison regulation navy blue. The AMCIT advised us that prisoners on this bloc have their own cells with private toilets. Like all prisoners at the "Torah Farms" unit, he is allowed to roam throughout the prison grounds between the hours of 7 A.M. and 5 P.M, though he added that "political prisoners" (presumably including Nour) are not allowed to interact with non-political prisoners.

3. (SBU) In all likelihood, Nour's visit to the warden's office, during Conoff's presence, was not a coincidence. The warden may have acted on his own initiative, or perhaps on instructions, but the intent was most likely to let the U.S. Embassy see that Nour was in good condition and was not being mistreated. Separately from this encounter, we are seeking an official Embassy visit to Nour as soon as the GOE will grant it.
RICCIARDONE